

constituent elements are substantially the same as those of the first embodiment, and hence the corresponding elements are designated by identical reference numerals, of which detailed description will be omitted.

As illustrated in FIG. 4, the cover 13 is attached to the unit body 10 by way of a hinge mechanism 30. The hinge mechanism 30 comprises a pair of coaxial holes 31 and a pair of coaxial mounting shafts 32 which project into the pair of coaxial holes 31.

The coaxial holes 31 are provided in a recess 33 at opposite surfaces facing to each other. The recess 33 is formed in the unit body 10. The cover 13 is integrally provided with a hollow cylindrical support 34 to be received in the recess 33. The mounting shafts 32 are disposed in the hollow portion of the support 34. The support 34 is provided with an opening 35 through which the hollow portion can be exposed. A pair of grips 36 secured to the two mounting shafts 32 projects from the opening 35. By the action of a spring 37 serving as a biasing means interposed therebetween, the two shafts 32 are biased away from each other so that the tip ends of the mounting shafts 32 project outward from the ends of the support 34.

Supposing that the two grips 36 are urged closer to each other against a biasing force of the spring 37, the tip ends of the mounting shafts 32 which have so far projected from the ends of the support 34 will retract into the hollow portion of the support 34. In this state the support 34 is brought into the recess 33 of the unit body 10. The subsequent release of the grips 36 allows the mounting shafts 32 to move in the direction apart from each other by the biasing force of the spring 37, with the result that the tip ends of the mounting shafts 32 project from the ends of the support 34 and enter the coaxial holes 31. The cover 13 is now attached to the unit body 10 for opening and closing. Similar operation also enables the cover 13 to be readily removed from the unit body 10.

With the above structure, the cover 13 can easily be replaced. In this case, with the cover 13 removed, the entry operation may be performed by means of the input pen or fingers.

FIG. 5 shows a portable information terminal according to the third embodiment of the present invention. The third embodiment is characterized in that the cover is provided with a protrusion serving to exert a pressing force onto the surface of the pressure-sensitive input device when the cover is closed. The other constituent elements are substantially the same as those of the preceding embodiments, and hence the corresponding elements are correspondingly referenced and will not be further detailed.

As shown in FIG. 5, three protrusions 40 are formed on the back of the cover 13 for pressing the surface of the pressure-sensitive input device 12 at specific regions. At the top of each of the protrusions 40, a rubber member is mounted as a resilient member resiliently coming into contact with the surface of the pressure-sensitive input device 12. Upon closing the cover 13, these protrusions 40 is urged against the corresponding regions of the pressure-sensitive input device 12 to allow the information corresponding to the pressed regions to be displayed through the display window 14.

With such structure, by previously registering a specific positional pattern of the protrusions 40 in the CPU 20, desired information can be displayed only when an actual positional pattern coincides with the specific positional pattern. Thus, this positional pattern functions as a personal identification or a password. The allocation of positional

patterns to individual operators makes it possible to provide a custom made cover 13 dedicated to a specific person. In this case, the above-described operating button device may be provided in cooperation with the protrusions.

FIG. 6 shows a portable information terminal according to the fourth embodiment of the present invention. The fourth embodiment is characterized in that an input pen is provided with the above-described protrusions, and the input pen is received within the cover to exert a pressing force onto the pressure-sensitive input device when the cover is closed.

As shown in FIG. 6, the back of the cover 13 is provided with a pen receptacle 51 for receiving an input pen 50. The input pen 50 has a surface on which three protrusions 52 are formed for pressing specific regions of the pressure-sensitive input device 12. At the top of each of the protrusions 52, a rubber member is mounted as a resilient member coming into resilient-contact with the surface of the pressure-sensitive input device 12. Upon closing of the cover 13, the protrusions 52 of the input pen 50 received in the pen receptacle 51 are brought into contact with the surface of the pressure-sensitive input device 12 to exert a pressing force onto the surface thereof. Accordingly, without a specific input pen to be mounted, the portable information terminal is adapted not to work.

What is claimed is:

1. A portable information terminal comprising:

a unit body including a display and a pressure-sensitive input device overlying said display, said display and said pressure-sensitive input device being assembled in said unit body;

said pressure-sensitive input device having a pressure-sensitive surface;

a cover pivotally attached to said unit body for covering said pressure-sensitive device;

an operating button device provided in the cover, an operating surface of the operating button device being exposed from a surface of the cover when the cover is in a closed position, the operating button device exerting a pressing force applied to said operating surface onto the pressure-sensitive surface;

a detection switch provided between said unit body and said cover for detecting a closed state of said cover; and

a CPU provided in the terminal for changing entry modes of said pressure-sensitive input device when the detection switch detects the closed state, wherein

closing operation of said cover causes a change-over of operations for the terminal, wherein:

the cover has a pen receptacle formed therein;

the terminal further includes an input pen having a protrusion thereon, and

said input pen being received in said pen receptacle, whereby when said cover is in the closed position, the protrusion is brought into contact with the pressure-sensitive surface.

2. A portable information terminal according to claim 1, wherein said cover is removably attached to said unit body by way of a hinge mechanism.

3. A portable information terminal according to claim 2, wherein said hinge mechanism includes:

a recess defined in the unit body, said recess having a first surface and a second surface opposite the first surface, the first surface having a first hole and the second surface having a second hole, the first and second holes being coaxial to each other;

a support provided on the cover, the support to be received in the recess;